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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - NOVEMBER 24

¶11. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

¶12. (SBU) Summary: CNDP rebel leader Laurent Nkunda presented new local administrators at a November 22 rally in Rutshuru. In his address, Nkunda stressed that "we are all Congolese," criticizing the UNSC's decision to authorize additional forces for MONUC. A CNDP intermediary contacted Embassy Kampala complaining that the French International Red Cross was misusing humanitarian corridors. The level of armed banditry and reprisals is on the rise in the region. Some IDPs from Kibati 1 camp have apparently opted to return to their villages, rather than to be transferred to the Mugunga 3 camp. End summary.

Security Situation

¶13. (SBU) UNDSS reported that there has been an increase in banditry, criminal violence, and reprisals against perpetrators. On November 20, for the second consecutive night, a civilian mob in Goma killed an armed bandit.

Political Developments

¶14. (SBU) On November 22, CNDP rebel leader Nkunda gave a 45-minute speech in Rutshuru to a crowd of approximately 2,000, some of whom were apparently forced to attend. Nkunda presented 10 new local administrators, noting that it was necessary to appoint them, because the former administrators had fled. Nkunda emphasized that the new administrators were all well known to the community, not Rwandans, as many had expected. Nkunda, who switched between French, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, and Kinande during the speech, proclaimed that "we are all Congolese" and that MONUC was unnecessary, if Congolese worked together. Nkunda criticized the recent UNSC decision to authorize additional MONUC troops for the DRC.

¶15. (SBU) In a well-scripted event, CNDP officials presented a Mai Mai child soldier, then asked for someone from his home village to take him home, because "the CNDP does not fight children." When the official asked for someone from the boy's village to bring him home, a man appeared to retrieve the boy from the stage. Two FARDC soldiers were also presented, one of them declaring that they had been well treated by the CNDP. Approximately 20 local police were on hand, who, according to a local resident, were the same police as before, but are now working for the CNDP. Nkunda's security detail, according to TDY RSO, appeared professional and competent. Some two dozen press, almost exclusively international, attended.

¶16. (SBU) A CNDP intermediary contacted Embassy Kampala to express concerns about French misuse of humanitarian corridors. The intermediary claimed that 60 trucks from the French International

Red Cross were using the corridors, but not transporting humanitarian supplies. According to the intermediary, the French are trying to encourage deployment of Angolan troops with the aim of attacking the CNDP, not the FDLR. The intermediary also asked for a U.S. verification team to monitor the corridors, as well as to carry out general monitoring.

Humanitarian Situation

¶7. (SBU) The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that some IDPs have departed the Kibati camps to return to Kibumba, Rugari, and Rumangabo, rather than go to Mugunga 3 camp, as planned. According to some humanitarian agencies, many IDPs believe Mugunga 3 is too far away from their fields and home villages. Radio Okapi confirmed that many residents have returned to the villages of Kibumba, Rugari, and Rubare.

¶8. (SBU) The last of nine trucks transporting non-food items arrived in Goma on November 22. USAID/DART's Program Officer escorted the trucks to UNICEF's warehouse and consigned the cargo to UNICEF for distribution to IDPs.

¶9. (SBU) A SADC delegation visited the Kibati IDP camp on November 24. The delegation, composed of Angolan, Zambian, Swazi, and Tanzanian officials, is in North Kivu to assess the humanitarian situation.

GARVELINK